

Senior Services

• Adding Years to Your Life and Life to Your Years •



This special insert of "Rockville Reports" highlights many services that are offered for senior citizens and their families in Rockville. If you have questions about the information provided here, contact the Rockville Senior Center at 240-314-8800, visit www.rockvillemd.gov/seniorcenter or stop by 1150 Carnation Drive in Rockville.

Senior Center Counts Down To Its 25-Year Anniversary

Next April marks a milestone in Rockville City history – the Rockville Senior Center will celebrate its 25th anniversary.

Two Senior Center staffers are particularly excited for the celebration. Lorraine Schack and Karen Lumpkin were there for the grand opening and now both are looking forward to taking part in the landmark anniversary celebration.

"I remember the grand opening like it was yesterday," said Schack, a 26-year employee with the City. "It was a great event. The 25th anniversary celebration will be just as exciting as we commemorate the advancements and progress we have made to improve the lives of our senior population."

As much as there is to be said about the center's evolution, the original mission of the center remains the same: *Adding years to your life and life to your years.*

To that end, some of the original Senior Center programs have stood the test of time to complement the offerings that can be found in its rooms on any given day. An original event, the monthly Birthday Party, is still a center favorite among members. Each month, all members with a birthday in that particular month gather for a birthday celebration complete with refreshments and entertainment.

With time and lifestyle changes, however, the Senior center also has adapted to meet the ever-growing interests of its members. The Center includes a computer lab, exercise and fitness rooms, ceramics lab, library, woodshop, craft room and health room to address nutrition and wellness needs.

"The City really makes senior services a priority," said Lumpkin. "I can remember there only being a few classes and a limited amount of equipment. Now, there is so much to offer, we often have trouble finding space for everything we want to do."

Not only have the offerings grown, but so has use of the center. The diversity of the membership is particularly apparent. Outreach staff now offer programs and services in Spanish and Chinese.

"I remember when the halls of the center were empty," said Schack. "Or at least it seemed that way compared to today. Now, there's not a day that goes by that the center isn't busy with something going on. What a change from 25 years ago. It is really quite something."

A number of special events are planned for April to celebrate the anniversary. See the calendar on page 4 for details. ■

Celebrating
25
YEARS



A SURE SHOT THAT IT'S A GREAT TIME TO BE A SENIOR CITIZEN IN ROCKVILLE... Rockville's population aged 60 and older is expected to double by 2020. That is why the City is working hard to diversify its senior services, offer new programs and expand the Rockville Senior Center. Whether an older adult in the City is physically fit and looking to maintain an active lifestyle, or is in need of a little extra help with transportation and a warm meal, Rockville Senior Services is there to help.

The Rockville Senior Center is gearing up for another 25 years and beyond of excellent service and invites everyone in the City to join the celebration.

Seniors Discover Youth Through Fitness at Center

Rockville resident Marguerite Reich has discovered the fountain of youth.

"Keeping active is the whole secret," said the 91-year-old fitness enthusiast.

Almost every day Reich finds her way to the Rockville Senior Center for line dancing, tone and stretch or aerobics classes, programs with which she has been involved for more than 20 years.

Chris Klopfer, sports and exercise specialist and a certified personal trainer, joined the senior services staff in 2005.

"Chris is marvelous," Reich said. "She is a ball of fire and really gets us going."

Knowing the importance of fitness in anyone's life, Klopfer said she is especially inspired with her new position with the City.

"I recently had a member come to me, asking for help," Klopfer said. "She had not kept up with her rehabilitation program and needed to get her body back into

shape very slowly because of her medical condition. She asked me if it was depressing working with the seniors. I said, 'No, not at all. Even if I can make just a small difference in someone's quality of life, that's all that matters. As a matter of fact, I love this job.'"

Klopfer noted that even just a small amount of exercise helps. She said many people – of all ages – are intimidated by fitness because they think they have to jump right into an hour routine every day.

"I've started people on small increments," she said. "For example, someone who does not exercise at all could start out with as little as a five-minute walk, move up to a 10-minute walk, and just build from there."

Klopfer said she is amazed by the progress some members have made just by gradually working up to their own customized routine.

"Keeping active is the whole secret."

— Marguerite Reich,
Senior Center
fitness enthusiast

Two members in particular – Katherine Foti and Ahmad Raza – recently worked up to the point that they no longer needed oxygen to work out. Foti was given the go ahead by her doctor to travel, which she previously had been prohibited from doing. And Raza said the center has changed his life.

"It's just wonderful," Raza said. "I've been coming here for about a year and it's made quite a difference."

And with Klopfer's enthusiasm, keeping motivated is simple.

"You are just never too old to start," Klopfer said. "You can build muscle mass at any age, and the benefits are amazing. I see it here every, single day."

Of all the documented health benefits of exercise, Klopfer noted that in every case the benefits heavily outweigh any risks.

"It is worth it for one simple reason," she said. "Overall quality of life."

The fitness staff offers a wide variety of exercise and sport classes which are supplemented by a state-of-the-art fitness room. Programs are geared to all fitness and ability levels.

For more information, call Chris Klopfer at 240-314-8822. ■



Katherine Foti (left) and Ahmad Raza (right) exercise regularly. Marguerite Reich (bottom, far right) participates in Tone and Stretch class.

Seniors Find Volunteering 'Makes Life Worth Living'

Bernie Shannon is one of the Rockville Senior Center's most dedicated volunteers. An original member, Shannon has volunteered countless hours during his 25 years with the center – and according to him, every moment has been worth it.

"Volunteering at the center makes life worth living," Shannon said. "It's wonderful that we have this place. And the people that operate the Senior Center make it memorable."

Shannon, 86, currently volunteers to run the badminton and Newcomb volleyball programs, in addition to the fitness and dancing classes he takes every week. He is even one of the center's elite Senior Olympians, recently winning a gold medal in badminton (see article below).

The best part about it is that Shannon's energy is just one example of the teamwork that goes into the volunteer structure of the center. Each year, Rockville Seniors, Inc. (RSI) recognizes the efforts of more than 300 volunteers who have given their time and talents over the past 12 months. The volunteers, who are honored

during national Older Americans Month, annually donate a combined total of nearly 30,000 hours.

Volunteers support the Rockville Senior Center primarily between the hours of 9 a.m.- 4 p.m. and in a variety of ways such as welcoming visitors at the front desk, operating the Gift and Thrift shops and helping with the Center's multitude of services and events.

City residents who volunteer more than 50 hours a year are rewarded with a free membership. Non-city residents must volunteer 100 or more hours. Anyone interested in volunteering at the Rockville Senior Center can complete an application at the front desk, leave a message for the volunteer coordinator, or go online to www.rockvillemd.gov/seniorcenter.

"Without our volunteers, we wouldn't be able to provide so many high quality services to Rockville's seniors," said Jill Hall, Senior Center supervisor. "We want them to know that we appreciate them and we thank them for all of their efforts."

A highlight of the Volunteer Apprecia-



Yung Yu Hsia receives the Volunteer of the Year Award from Ruth Hanessian.

tion Party is the announcement of the annual Estelle Berberian Volunteer of the Year Award. Previous winners have been Stuart Crump (2005) and Yung Yu Hsia (2006).

Crump received the award for his efforts in the computer lab, delivering bakery products to the center, working during the Spring and Holiday Bazaars and serving on the Senior Citizens Commission. He volunteered more than 300 hours in 2005.

Hsia was honored for his help in the center's nutrition programs (both American and Chinese).



Bernie Shannon is one of the sports and exercise program's most dedicated volunteers.

The Volunteer of the Year Award was established on Estelle Berberian's 100th birthday for her integral involvement in the center's creation in 1982.

A Corporate Appreciation Award is also presented each year to the business or organization that has provided significant assistance and support to the center over the past year. Previous winners have included PEPCO, Montgomery College, Suburban Federal Savings Bank, Entenmann's Bakery, Suburban Hospital and the Rockville Duplicate Bridge Club. ■

First 'Looking to Meet Someone New' Speed Dating Event Feb. 14

For many people in Rockville, no matter what the age, it can be difficult to make new friends or find people with common interests. Events at the Rockville Senior Center make interacting with others 60 or older easier... and now even faster.

The first "Senior Speed Dating" event will be held on Valentine's Day, Feb. 14, from 1:30-3:30 p.m. at the Rockville Senior Center. The event called, *Looking to Meet Someone New*, will offer participants opportunities to find people with whom they

have common interests, whether just as friends or maybe even romance.

In today's busy world, speed dating is a new trend that is designed for people to quickly interact to see if there is a connection. Many seniors are turning to more modern methods of meeting friends and loved ones, including online dating.

In this special version of speed dating, participants will be paired up for several minutes to discuss common interests and personal backgrounds, including hobbies

and grandchildren. When the time is up, they will switch partners and start a new round of conversation.

"This is a fun, new way to foster new friendships," said Lorraine Schack, Rockville's coordinator of Senior Social Services. "Those who are able to find people with common interests to spend time with, whether just as friends or in a more romantic way, are often happier and more fulfilled in their later years. Making connections among the senior population

in Rockville has been part of the center's mission for 25 years. This event is one new way to accomplish this."

Looking to Meet Someone New is a free activity, but advanced registration is required and can be done by visiting www.rockvillemd.gov (and clicking on Rock Enroll), by calling 240-314-8810 or registering at the front desk of the Rockville Senior Center. ■

— by Jacqueline Christo

Membership Has Its Benefits

Being a member of the Rockville Senior Center offers those 60 and above significant benefits. Those benefits include:

- Early registration for programs and classes
- Lower-rate program fees
- Reduced rental fees
- \$25 per year fitness membership
- Unlimited use of drop-in rooms
- Mailed monthly newsletter

For the first time, people aged 60 and over living outside the City limits of Rockville will be able to take classes at the Center. Starting with the Winter 2007 Recreation Guide, there will be a new non-resident/non-member category.

Members can register for programs one week before residents and two weeks before non-resident/non-members.

These member benefits plus the many offerings for Rockville seniors including education and travel, fitness and sports, socialization, outreach and assistance, wellness, meals and transportation, help to make retirement years rewarding and enjoyable.

For more information on becoming a member, contact the Center at 240-314-8800. ■



Senior Olympians in Our Midst



Rockville Senior Center members Gloria Hong and Ted Murphy were two multiple medal winners at the Senior Olympics. Pictured at top left is Hong during the javelin competition. Pictured bottom left is Murphy during the pole vault.



Twelve members of the Rockville Senior Center received medals at the 2006 Maryland Senior Olympics, which took place in September at Towson University. The above members were recognized by the center during a recent celebration: (front row, left to right) Gloria Hong, Ted Murphy, G. Janardann, Louise Curtain; (middle row, left to right), Louis Rhodes, Bernie Shannon, Dennis Chapson; (top row, left to right) George Izumi, Howard Briscoe, Dick Eckenrode and Al Jaques. Not pictured are Rinn Shinn and Dean Henry.

Center Keeps Changing With the Times

Walk through the Rockville Senior Center and be amazed at how modern and well-maintained the facility is. Although it started as an elementary school in the 1950s, the building has been extensively renovated and includes state-of-the-art fitness equipment, computer lab and audio-visual equipment.

"When people come to visit they cannot believe how busy or large the building is," said Jill Hall, Rockville's Senior Center supervisor. "And we are not finished growing."

Future plans include a 9,100 square-foot expansion to the fitness area that will enlarge the program space and add showers and locker rooms. This year, 30 more parking spaces and an awning will

be added to the rear of the building. Additionally, the exercise room floor will be replaced.

"We are so lucky to have the support of the city, as well as the fundraising resources of Rockville Seniors, Inc. (RSI), to continue to expand and improve the building," Hall said.

To plan for future enhancements in the facility and the programs offered, staff members spend a significant amount of time researching trends and conducting studies.

Karen Lumpkin, the senior recreation coordinator, said determining what programs to offer is becoming harder each year as the center has to serve people who have a 40-year differ-

ence in age range.

"Not only do we have the older seniors who have been coming here since we opened, but we also have active 70-80 year-olds and we are now seeing the Baby Boomers participate," Lumpkin said.

Add to that the need for programs in Spanish and Chinese.

"We try our best to meet all requests – from day trips to educational classes to social events," she said.

To determine future needs, staff has undertaken a comprehensive member satisfaction survey (completed by almost 1,500 individuals), initiated a senior needs assessment survey to follow-up from the survey conducted

in 2001, and recently participated in the development of a senior services long range plan.

The long range plan was completed over a 10-month period by 18 citizens who volunteered their time to "look at issues, trends and future demands for senior services, while establishing priorities to meet new and possibly different service requirements." The report will be presented to Rockville's Mayor and Council later this year.

"We need to use a variety of methods to obtain input so that we provide the programs and services people want," said Lorraine Schack, Rockville's coordinator of senior social services.

New programs include an evening Harvest Ball with the Gaithersburg Upcounty Senior Center and a speed-dating program in February. ■



The Rockville Senior Center reaches out to the City's Hispanic population through special programs and events. Center members, above, celebrate Mexican culture at the Hispanic Heritage Festival.

Senior Services Reaches Out

Simply put, Martha McClelland's job is to help people.

But there is nothing simple about what McClelland and the Rockville Senior Center's outreach staff have done to improve the lives of the City's seniors.

From transportation services to nutritional support to medical referrals, Senior Services staff has done it all.

"We're here to help," she said. "We help people who need social support. Or we are here even just to listen. Whatever it takes to reach out, we will do."

McClelland and her Spanish-speaking counterpart, Miriam Minera, note that part of "reaching out" includes identifying those in need.

"A lot of people may not have anyone else but us," McClelland said. "And some people do not know what we can offer them, which is why we try to get the word out as much as possible. If we can't help directly, we'll find the place that can."

Information and assistance is available to the general public, not just those over 60, which is a little known fact.

"If you are a caregiver, we can answer most of the questions you have about aging in Rockville," said Minera. "People can always call us first if they have questions. Since staff members speak Spanish and Chinese, and information is pro-

vided in languages other than English, we can really make people feel comfortable and get them the correct answers."

The following is a list of outreach services available in Rockville. Some are free, but others come with a small fee, or are based on financial need:

- Home repair, maintenance and modification referrals
- Home visits
- Senior health insurance assistance program appointments
- Rockville Emergency Assistance Program
- Notary services
- Daily lunch program
- Senior assistance fund
- Grandparents Raising Grandchildren support group
- International program
- Transportation
- Legal assistance
- Application/form writing assistance
- Information and referrals

And the list will continue growing.

With the expanding Asian population, the center is in the process of adding a Chinese-speaking person to its outreach staff.

For more information about outreach services or to make a referral, call 240-314-8816 for English, 240-314-8817 for Spanish and 240-314-8818 for Chinese. ■

More Than Just a Ride *Drivers are Interested in Helping Seniors*

Rides to the Rockville Senior Center are more than just a short trip on a bus.

"Our drivers are more than bus drivers," said Lorraine Schack, coordinator of senior social services. They are caring individuals with an interest in helping seniors and ensuring their safety.

Schack, who has coordinated the senior transportation program since 1980, said the transportation service has been one of the most important offerings the city provides for seniors. Older adults often need special care and support in getting out of their homes.

"Our drivers provide that one-on-one service from doorstep to doorstep," Schack said.

Each bus is equipped with a chairlift to accommodate all riders.

ping, recreation trips and other activities. Subsidized taxi coupons also are available for Rockville residents at least 60 years of age or for those who have a disability that prevents them from driving.

Eddie Lynn, Sr., Rockville's transportation supervisor, is a veteran driver who realizes the importance of his role.

"My job is to make sure our members get here safely," Lynn said. "And that's what I do."

Lynn has been with the Senior Center for 18 years.

"I remember when there were just two buses that carried 16 people," he said. "Now we have four big buses that carry 24 people and a 10-passenger van. We need them for the number of



Driver and Transportation Supervisor Eddie Lynn Sr., provides door to door assistance for seniors who utilize the City's free transportation service.

The City's free senior bus transportation affords otherwise isolated seniors opportunities for socialization, meals and participation in a wide variety of classes and activities at the Senior Center.

According to recent calculations, the City provides 2,300 rides per month to the center, and 3,000 rides total each month. As part of the transportation offerings, the City offers rides for shop-

people we service."

Lynn noted another factor of importance of the transportation service.

"It's just safer all around," he said. "We make sure the members get here, instead of driving themselves when maybe they shouldn't. It keeps the roads safer, and we don't mind picking them up."

To schedule transportation, call the center at 240-314-8810. ■



Alfonso Abadia and Cecilia Romero married after meeting at the Rockville Senior Center. The couple is especially glad the center has special programs for spanish-speaking seniors.

Senior Center Embraces Diversity

"I am so happy here at the center," said Racquel Jimenez. This is not the first time these words have been heard when describing the Rockville Senior Center. Jimenez, a long-time member of the center, said meeting new friends and learning to speak English was critical to her existence. For many senior immigrants in Rockville, without English skills they might otherwise be isolated in their homes. But learning new skills is not the only benefit of visiting the center. Alfonso Abadia and Cecilia Romero are especially glad the center has such a large program for Spanish-speaking seniors. After meeting at the center in 2001, they were married on Jan. 14, 2005. Another couple, Chu Shen and

Yong Shu Tang, also married after meeting at the Senior Center's English classes. The Senior Center recognizes and celebrates the rich diversity of Rockville's citizens. There is support for members from all backgrounds with beginning and advanced English classes, citizenship classes, a weekly Chinese lunch and many social and cultural programs. These activities help to make the City's newest senior residents feel more comfortable in America, a transition that is often difficult for the aging population. In this respect, the Senior Center is a true "community" center as it provides a welcoming environment for all nationalities. "It is like my second home," said Jimenez. "Without the Senior Center, I don't know how my life would be". ■



The Rockville Senior Center is available for rentals for a variety of special events – including weddings.

Senior Center Sprouts Opportunities to Host Parties

With spacious meeting rooms, reasonable rates, beautiful park setting and a convenient location, the Rockville Senior Center may be the perfect place to host an upcoming special celebration. "People are pleasantly surprised at what the Senior Center has to offer," said Jill Hall, Rockville's Senior Center supervisor. "There is plenty of space to host indoor events, adequate parking and great outdoor areas for pictures." The Senior Center's largest room, the Carnation Room, holds up to 150

guests and has an elevated stage for a show, DJ or head table. For smaller events or meetings, the Sunroom can accommodate 24 people. There is also an outdoor gazebo that is an ideal backdrop for wedding or anniversary pictures. Virtual tours are available online at www.rockvillemd.gov/seniorcenter. Senior Center staff is available to answer any questions and provide in-person tours. Call Melissa McKenna at 240-314-8801 for more information. ■

SENIOR CENTER OFFERINGS

NOVEMBER

- 2 Better Daily Living at Home: New Options That Make Sense for Seniors** Learn about many essential services available when living at home gets more difficult.
- 11&12 Lion's Club Train Show** Every room in the Senior Center is transformed into a train display.
- 13 Medicare 2007 Update** Learn about changes to Medicare.
- 15 Protect Yourself: Identity Theft and Scams** A look at everyday measures to protect personal information.
- 15 Flu Shot Clinic** 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Flu shots available.

DECEMBER

- 2 Holiday Bazaar** The Annual Bazaar features more than 30 craft vendors, thrift items and a \$500 grand prize raffle.

JANUARY

- 9 Winter Trip Registration** Registration via lottery is offered for a variety of trips from January-March 2007.
- 11 Caring for the Caregiver** Learn to manage stress and maximize physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being as you provide care for loved ones.
- 25 Weight Loss Challenge** Maintain a healthy lifestyle and set important fitness goals for the year.
- 30 Being Prepared for Emergencies** Learn about the five actions that can make us safer during emergencies.
- 30&31 AARP Driving Class** Designed for older drivers, this course provides updates on the rules of the road and accident prevention.

FEBRUARY

- 14 Looking to Meet Someone New?** Whether you are looking for a new friend or a new romance, come see what speed dating is all about.
- 15 ABCs of Financial Planning** Learn about basic estate planning documents such as wills, trusts, durable power of attorney and living wills.
- 28 The Belle of Amherst** Presented by the Montgomery County's Senior Theatre, Emily Dickinson is portrayed with insight into her life and poetry.

MARCH

- 9 Caring for the Caregiver** Repeat of Jan. 11 program.
- 22 Line Dance Social** Learn the Electric Slide and many other fun line dances. No partner or dance experience required to participate.
- APRIL**
- 2 Brunch** Kick-off the Senior Center's 25th anniversary celebration with a brunch and dance.
- 11&12 All Day Exercise** Try any exercise class for free to see which one is right for you.
- 14 Family Fun Day** The community is welcome to attend this intergenerational event complete with indoor and outdoor activities.
- 18 Senior Center's 25th Anniversary Celebration** Entertainment, proclamations and refreshments on tap as the center recalls the past 25 years. City seniors can join for FREE today.
- 26 Silver Jubilee Celebration** Entertainment, dancing and refreshments are highlighted at this special evening program.

Step Into Wellness

Rockville encourages senior citizens to care for themselves through a variety of special wellness services offered at the Senior Center:

- Daily blood pressure screening
- Suburban Hospital nurse is available for consultation on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays
- Screenings for cholesterol, hearing, vision, body fat, bone density and more
- Health information library

- Annual health fair
 - Short term loan of medical equipment
 - Health lectures
 - A Mobile Medical clinic the first and third Tuesday of the month from 1-3 p.m. for those without medical insurance
- For more information call Mary Fleisher, the center's wellness coordinator, at 240-314-8803. ■



Nurse Ronnie Kidd takes a member's blood pressure during a weekly wellness screening for seniors to monitor their health.